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ABSTRACT

This book describes how a journalist turned college professor faces the students of Generation X at a community college in California. He discovers a culture war between generations--a culture wave between college teachers, typically Baby Boomers and members of Generation X. This cultural divide is between the modern and postmodern worlds and the problems seen stem from educators, who reared under the tenets of the modern age, are confronted by a new reality: a generation of young people who have emerged from a radically changed, postmodern society. The system errs on the side of mediocrity and makes too much allowance for consumerism. Instead, the new roles of the educator in postmodern society should be recognized: (1) guiding students in the use of information-gathering tools; and (2) helping students imagine new ways of looking at knowledge. The educational establishment needs to understand and fully articulate, to itself and to the public, that it is trying to teach people of a new sort. Academic standards, however, should not be lowered, even in the face of consumer pressure. Colleges must end grade inflation and work to make grades again mean what they purport to mean. Colleges are adapting to the poor habits of the students, rather than students adapting to the requirements of the institutions. (Contains 185 references) (JLS)

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